

## Lexington woman recovers from accident



Debbie Sharp

Ever wonder what happens to accident victims after a long stay in the hospital, after the local fundraisers, after they go home to recuperate and put their lives back together?

The Gazette-Times was lucky enough to talk with Debbie Sharp recently. She was the victim of an accident December 13, 1983 which left her severely injured and totaled her 1974 Monte Carlo.

She was in the hospital until April, 1984 with her neck broken in two or

three places, her back broken in three places, and numerous cuts and bruises. The first three and a half months, she was in a coma. When she first came out, she didn't recognize her husband, parents, or children. She did recognize them, however, before she was released from the hospital.

At the time of her release, she had a shunt in her brain, three pins in her back, and wore a neck brace. She had difficulty doing most things. She used a wheel chair in the hospital, but refused to have one at home. In fact, her doctor had told her that she would never be able to walk again. "Looking back," she says, "I think he just said that to make me more determined to do it."

Her doctor also recommended a nursing home for the first few weeks out of the hospital which she refused and physical therapy which she didn't want. The first two months, her mother helped every day with the necessary things to keep the Lexington woman and her family going. After that, Debbie cooked and cleaned house herself. "I didn't do much, but I'm stubborn and I did what I had to do, I even road a horse two or three times."

Debbie, now 29, and her husband Mickey who works at Kinzua, have three children Danny, 12, Donita, 10 and Joshua, 4. They were all very patient with me, she says, and have become more self-reliant. "They don't depend on me for much."

Cooking was difficult at first, she continues, because she had to cover one eye to see what she was trying to do. Her husband did a lot of the cooking for awhile until she learned to cope with the double vision which lasted about six months.

She couldn't write at first and says she still "writes funny," but worst of all was that she loves to read and couldn't manage that at all for awhile. She did see an eye doctor who prescribed magnifying glasses "which didn't help, it cleared up on its own. Now, I can read as long as I want." Though her vision is good most of the time, she says "If I'm lying on the couch watching TV, sometimes my vision still blurs, if my head is turned just right."

In April, 1985, about a year after her release from the hospital, she went back to work at the Wagon Wheel in Heppner. Her doctor had told her she would never be able to work again, that she wouldn't remember how to mix drinks or to work a cash register. Not only did she remember how to mix the drinks, but also who drank what.

"Some people I met just before the accident, I didn't remember and some I didn't remember but knew what they drank," she says with a positive smile.

One of the pins in her back conflicted with a nerve, so she had no feeling in her right leg which made walking difficult. Last October, the pins were removed and "now I walk better," she says. She's not able to drive a car yet, she confesses, and "I can't run and my dancing isn't what it used to be."

Her doctor, however, says she's doing well and is amazed at her improvement and that she is able to do all of the things she can do.

The worst thing through it all, she says is that before the shunt could be placed in her head, part of her hair was shaved. She admits to having worn a wig for awhile, but now her own curls casually surround her face.

Another thing that is upsetting is the six months beginning just before the accident which she doesn't remember. It's beginning to come back in bits, though, "I went to LaGrande about six months ago and remembered being there before but didn't recall why I was there, or who I was with."

It's hard to imagine that someone as personable as Debbie could be afraid of people, but she confesses that for a long time she was just that because "they knew what I went through and I thought they would laugh because I'm not 'right' yet." Still, sometimes, she feels that people are nice because they know what she went through, but just reminds herself that can't be so because "they were nice before."

When business tapered off at the Wagon Wheel, she felt it was her fault, even when she was reassured that business was just slow, she still felt that people were not coming in, just because she was working. "Now, I'm coming out of my depression," she says as she opens a Mt. Dew for a customer at the Sagebrush Saloon and chats with him for a moment.

It's been a long hard trip back, she admits but her "brown eyes and bull-headed Papineau determination" have helped her progress so far. She realizes, too, that God has been good to her, but turned down a request to tell her story to a Church congregation, because "I can't tell anyone else how to act." Although not a formal Church member, she says, "I believe, and I know He has helped me a lot."

The accident has changed her thinking somewhat, she says. Before, she would sometimes put off doing things she wanted to do. "I'm not going to put anything off anymore. If I want to do it, I will do it."

## Mediation

current level of benefits for the remainder of this school year and following that a committee of three persons from the board and three from the teachers association would choose the insurance carrier. Effectively, this puts us in "no-man's-land," says Liles because the board needs to be sure the insurance carrier selected offers competitive rates. This "committee route, is just not a good way to do business."

Speaking for the teachers, Bill Jacobson of the Oregon Education Association, says insurance is definitely one of the main concerns for the teachers. The factfinder's report, he continues, does not solve the problem, but merely delays it. "There is no way that we can accept the contract without the insurance matter settled."

In general, Jacobson says, the teachers rejected the report because they felt it was "very one-sided and gave to the board even more than what they had asked for. We could not look at any of the issues and say 'we got what we were asking for.'"

Issues which Jacobson listed as being given to the board are early retirement and maintenance of standards. Teachers had asked for an

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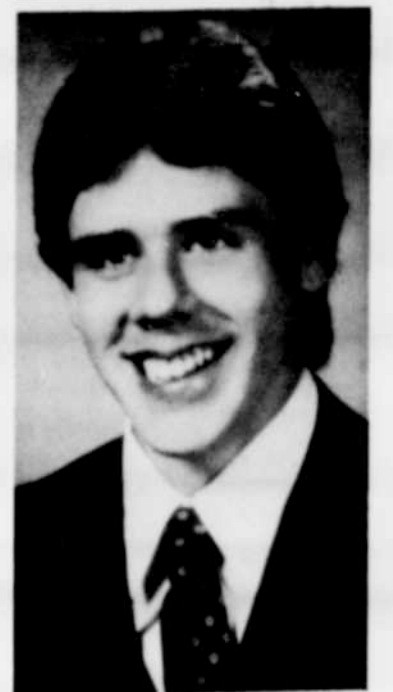
additional incentive for early retirement and the Board considered the current program of continuing to pay the employee's insurance benefits from age 58 through 65 as adequate incentive for early retirement. The district agreed to a narrower "maintenance of standards" clause, but refused to accept broad, general language. The teachers argued that the current language has existed for 10 years without major difficulty, so there was no reason for a change. The factfinder concurred with the district that the current language is vague and ambiguous, and a "breeding ground for grievances," and recommended his own language which is the type more commonly used in Oregon school contracts.

Jacobson considers the factfinder's position on "fair share," a "strange settlement." Concerning the "just cause for dismissal" issue, he says the report at least offers a compromise from which to work, but is still not satisfactory from the teachers' viewpoint.

All of the issues continue to be important for the teachers, but the factfinder's report, he says, will be a point from which to work at the meeting Monday night.

## Scholarship winners

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Keith Kenison

Keith Kenison, son of Mr. and Mrs. Don Kenison, Heppner, is the boys division third place winner. He has been accepted at Eastern Oregon State College where he will major in education and music. His high school activities include: membership in National Honor Society; 4.0 grade point average; senior class president; active in student government; jazz, pep, and concert band; currently student director of the band; has played football, golf, and varsity basketball.

## Rice returns to Wagon Wheel



Dick Rice

Dick Rice has returned as manager of the Wagon Wheel Cafe and Lounge in Heppner. He has owned the business since 1977, but has leased it during a portion of that time. Rice also owns and manages the tavern in Lexington with partner Sue Hayes. They have recently changed the Tavern's name to the Bunchgrass Saloon.

## Atiyeh proclaims Homemakers Week

Oregon Governor Vic Atiyeh has proclaimed the week of February 9-15 "Oregon Extension Homemakers Week" in Oregon in recognition of the 50th Anniversary of Extension Homemakers groups across the nation.

Extension Homemakers of Oregon strive to promote a better way of life for all through extending adult education in cooperation with the Extension Service of Oregon State University.



Dana Reid

Third place girls winner is Dana Reid, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Reid, Heppner. She has been accepted at Eastern Oregon State College where she plans to major in business and minor in psychology. Her high school activities include: membership in National Honor Society; four years of participation in volleyball and basketball; golf; dance team; cheerleading; student government; Girls Athletic Booster; member of Drama Club, Outdoor Club and the Catholic Youth Group.

Scholarship selection is based on academic scholarship, leadership, financial need and how well each candidate does in a personal interview, says local Elks Scholarship chairman, Jim Swanson. Each year the Elks National Foundation gives close to \$3 million in scholarship awards. The organization ranks second only to the U.S. government in amount of dollars given to students for education.

## Guess Who's 50!!



Happy Birthday, Mom, R.B. & Pork

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By Justine Weatherford

Women who are members of five groups of Soroptimists International came to Boardman on Saturday, Feb. 1, to join 10 enthusiasts there in the initial planning meeting aimed toward chartering a club in that community.

Fifty-three women met at the Dodge City Inn where various officers and members explained facts about the Soroptimist organization and conducted a question and answer period.

A second meeting is scheduled for Wednesday evening, Feb. 19. The largest delegation attending and the group most directly responsible for encouraging the formation of a club at Boardman was made up of 17 officers and members from Heppner.

The days program began with a welcome by Barbara Bloodworth, Heppner's president. All Soroptimists present introduced themselves and gave their classifications. The ten guests from Boardman also told their names, business classifications, and titles.

Clista Venard, Heppner, reviewed the history of the Soroptimist organization.

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